

## **PREPAREDNESS MONTH PROMOTES STORMREADY AND CERT**

Bismarck, ND – Preparedness is everyone's responsibility. All sectors of society - business and industry, civic and volunteer groups, industry associations and neighborhoods, as well as every individual citizen and every family - should plan ahead for disasters.

Nearly 90 percent of all presidentially declared disasters are weather related, leading to around 500 deaths per year and nearly \$14 billion in damage. To help Americans guard against the ravages of severe weather, the National Weather Service (NWS) designed the StormReady program. StormReady guides communities toward improved communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property.

“StormReady is a nationwide program that helps communities better protect citizens during severe weather—from tornadoes to blizzards. The program encourages communities to take a proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations. No community is storm proof, but StormReady can help communities save lives,” said John Paul (JP) Martin, Warning Coordination Meteorologist, NWS, Bismarck office.

StormReady provides emergency managers with clear-cut guidelines on how to improve their hazardous weather operations. Communities certified as StormReady are better prepared to save lives from the onslaught of severe weather through better planning, education, and awareness.

Community-based preparedness planning allows for preparation and response to anticipated disruptions and potential hazards following a disaster. Through pre-event planning, neighborhoods and worksites can work together to help reduce injuries, loss of lives, and property damage. Neighborhood preparedness will enhance the ability of individuals and neighborhoods to reduce their initial emergency needs and to manage their existing resources until professional assistance becomes available.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is designed to help communities prepare for effective disaster response in instances where normal emergency services are unavailable in the aftermath of a disaster or emergency. With training and information, individuals and community groups can be prepared to serve as a crucial resource capable of performing many of the emergency functions needed in the immediate post-disaster period.

“The CERT program is a positive and realistic approach for emergency situations where citizens will initially be on their own. The training teaches people how to put out small fires, provide basic medical aid, search for and rescue victims safely and effectively organize themselves until first responders can arrive,” said Connie Sprynczynatyk, Executive Director, North Dakota League of Cities. “Their actions can make a difference.”

Effective response requires comprehensive planning and coordination of all involved - government, volunteer groups, private businesses, schools, and community organizations. Get a kit, make a plan, be informed and get involved.

Preparedness information and links to other web sites with detailed information can be found on the Division of Homeland Security of the N.D. Department of Emergency Services (DES) website at [www.state.nd.us/des](http://www.state.nd.us/des). For more information on CERT contact the local emergency manager or visit the N.D. League of Cities website at [www.ndlc.org](http://www.ndlc.org) and select the Citizen Corps option. Information on StormReady is available at [www.stormready.noaa.gov](http://www.stormready.noaa.gov), or contact your local emergency manager.